

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Donald Eugene Griffin, Jr.,)	C/A No. 0:13-554-CMC-PJG
)	
Petitioner,)	
)	
vs.)	REPORT AND
)	RECOMMENDATION
Michael McCall, Warden of the Lee Correctional Institution,)	
)	
Respondent.)	
)	

The petitioner, Donald Eugene Griffin, Jr. ("Petitioner"), a self-represented state prisoner, brings this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. This habeas corpus matter is before the court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b) and Local Civil Rule 73.02(B)(2) DSC. Having reviewed the Petition in accordance with applicable law, the court concludes that it should be summarily dismissed as successive.

INITIAL REVIEW GENERALLY

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* Petition filed in this case pursuant to the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases, 28 U.S.C. foll. § 2254; and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-132, 110 Stat. 1214; and in light of the following precedents: Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); Nasim v. Warden, Md. House of Corr., 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995) (*en banc*); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983).

This court is required to liberally construe *pro se* petitions. Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89 (2007). *Pro se* petitions are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted

by attorneys, id; Gordon v. Leeke, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a petition filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. Hughes v. Rowe, 449 U.S. 5, 9 (1980); Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* petition the petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. Erickson, 551 U.S. at 93 (citing Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555-56 (2007)).

However, the requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. Weller v. Dep't of Soc. Servs., 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990). The mandated liberal construction afforded to *pro se* pleadings means that if the court can reasonably read the pleadings to state a valid claim on which the petitioner could prevail, it should do so; however, a district court may not rewrite a petition to include claims that were never presented, Barnett v. Hargett, 174 F.3d 1128 (10th Cir. 1999), construct the petitioner's legal arguments for him, Small v. Endicott, 998 F.2d 411 (7th Cir. 1993), or "conjure up questions never squarely presented" to the court, Beaudett v. City of Hampton, 775 F.2d 1274, 1278 (4th Cir. 1985).

DISCUSSION

With respect to his conviction and sentence, a petitioner's sole federal remedy is a writ of habeas corpus under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 or 28 U.S.C. § 2254, which can be sought only after a petitioner has exhausted his state court remedies. See 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b); Picard v. Connor, 404 U.S. 270 (1971); Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court, 410 U.S. 484,

490-491 (1973) (exhaustion required under 28 U.S.C. § 2241). Although it appears that Petitioner attempted to exhaust his state court remedies, his petition is successive.

Petitioner has filed two prior § 2254 habeas corpus action in this court. See C/A No. 2:07-874-PMD-RSC and C/A No. 2:07-1732-PMD-RSC. This court may take judicial notice of Petitioner's prior § 2254 cases. See Aloe Creme Laboratories, Inc. v. Francine Co., 425 F.2d 1295, 1296 (5th Cir. 1970) ("The District Court clearly had the right to take notice of its own files and records and it had no duty to grind the same corn a second time. Once was sufficient."). In C/A No. 2:07-00874-PMD-RSC, the petition was dismissed based on untimeliness. The grounds presented in the instant petition overlap somewhat with those in C/A No. 2:07-00874-PMD-RSC. Regardless of whether they have been presented before, however, they cannot be presented in this successive petition. "A claim presented in a second or successive habeas corpus application under section 2254 that was presented in a prior application shall be dismissed." 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(1).¹ Petitioner has presented no arguments that relate to any of the statutory exceptions.

¹ An exception applies if:

(A) the applicant shows that the claim relies on a new rule of constitutional law, made retroactive to cases on collateral review by the Supreme Court, that was previously unavailable; or

(B)(i) the factual predicate for the claim could not have been discovered previously through the exercise of due diligence; and

(ii) the facts underlying the claim, if proven and viewed in light of the evidence as a whole, would be sufficient to establish by clear and convincing evidence that, but for constitutional error, no reasonable factfinder would have found the applicant guilty of the underlying offense.

28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(2).

The “AEDPA does not define ‘second or successive.’ ” United States v. Orozco-Ramirez, 211 F.3d 862, 867 (5th Cir. 2000). The standard for determining whether a petition is successive appears in Slack v. McDaniel, 529 U.S. 473, 485-489 (2000) (to qualify as “successive” petition, prior petition must have been adjudicated on the merits). See Harvey v. Horan, 278 F.3d 370 (4th Cir. 2002) (dismissal of a habeas petition for procedural default is a dismissal on the merits for purposes of determining whether a habeas petition is successive). While a dismissal for failure to exhaust administrative remedies is not an adjudication “on the merits,” as discussed in Slack, a dismissal of a petition as untimely renders a subsequent petition successive because habeas relief is precluded outside of the limitations period in the absence of a valid equitable tolling argument.


As a result, the § 2254 petition in the above-captioned case is subject to dismissal under Rule 9 of the Section 2254 Rules.² Miller v. Bordenkircher, 764 F.2d 245, 248-250 & nn.3-5 (4th Cir. 1985); see also McClesky v. Zant, 499 U.S. 467 (1991); Section 106 of the AEDPA, Public Law 104-132, 110 U.S.Stat. 1214; Bennett v. Angelone, 92 F.3d 1336 (4th Cir. 1996).

RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, the court recommends that the petition for a writ of habeas corpus in the above-captioned case be dismissed in its entirety without requiring a return by the respondents. See Allen v. Perini, 424 F.2d 134, 141 (6th Cir. 1970) (federal district courts

² Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases in the United States District Courts, Rule 9, Second or Successive Petitions: “Before presenting a second or successive petition, the petitioner must obtain an order from the appropriate court of appeals authorizing the district court to consider the petition as required by 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3) and (4).”

have duty to screen habeas corpus petitions and eliminate burden placed on respondents caused by ordering an unnecessary answer or return); Toney v. Gammon, 79 F3d. 693, 697 (8th Cir. 1996) (a petition may be summarily dismissed if the record clearly indicates that the Petitioner's claims are either barred from review or without merit).



Paige J. Gossett
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

May 2, 2013
Columbia, South Carolina

Petitioner's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. “[I]n the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must ‘only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.’” Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co., 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005) (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P. 72 advisory committee’s note).

Specific written objections must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); see Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a), (d). Filing by mail pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
901 Richland Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985); United States v. Schronce, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984).